

**CITY OF LODI
INFORMAL INFORMATIONAL MEETING
"SHIRTSLEEVE" SESSION
CARNEGIE FORUM, 305 WEST PINE STREET
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2004**

An Informal Informational Meeting ("Shirtsleeve" Session) of the Lodi City Council was held Tuesday, February 24, 2004, commencing at 7:00 a.m.

A. ROLL CALL

Present: Council Members – Beckman, Howard, Land, and Mayor Hansen

Absent: Council Members – Hitchcock

Also Present: City Manager Flynn, Interim City Attorney Schwabauer, and City Clerk Blackston

B. CITY COUNCIL CALENDAR UPDATE

City Clerk Blackston reviewed the weekly calendar (filed).

C. TOPIC(S)

NOTE: Items were heard out of order as listed.

C-2 "Traffic improvements at Maxwell Street and Stockton Street"

Public Works Director Prima recalled that Council previously took action to abandon a portion of Neuharth and Ackerman Drives to create a cul-de-sac at Maxwell Street. Staff was advised to return to Council with recommendations for traffic improvements prior to the abandonment taking place.

Paula Fernandez, Traffic Engineer, reported that in January staff held a public information meeting to discuss alternative traffic safety improvements and gather input from the businesses affected by the abandonment. Over 15 businesses attended the meeting. A 64-foot truck test in the field indicated that additional no parking was needed at Maxwell Street and Ackerman Drive (i.e. 20 feet on each street). Widening Maxwell Street at the intersection will accommodate larger trucks. Staff intends to return to Council in closed session to discuss right of way acquisition. Any modifications that are made at the intersection of Maxwell and Stockton Streets would need to be implemented prior to the start of Cottage Bakery's construction. Cottage Bakery plans to have the abandonment complete by spring 2004.

Ms. Fernandez noted that the level of service methodology is described in the staff report (filed). Maxwell and Stockton Streets intersection operates at a level of service C. Traffic counts were taken in the winter. A seasonal adjustment was made because there are higher volumes in the summer. Staff recommends the improvements as shown on Exhibit B (filed), i.e. 100 feet on the north side of Maxwell Street, 46 feet on the south side of Maxwell Street, and 17 feet on the west side of Stockton Street. These changes will result in a loss of eight parking spaces and will accommodate the stripping modifications that are being recommended for the intersection. Once improvements on the east side are made, 49 parking spaces will be gained between Almond Drive and Elgin Avenue.

Council Member Howard advocated a crosswalk and suggested that the type that has illuminated lights be considered. She felt this was necessary to provide a reasonable form of safety, particularly with the number of parking spaces being added on the east side of the Stockton Street.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Byron Weisz of Cen-Cal Fire Systems stated that he would prefer not to lose the 17 feet in front of his building and hoped that it would be done as a last effort to solve the problem. He reported that two weeks ago on a Thursday at 6:30 p.m. the traffic was backed up from Kettleman Lane past Almond Drive. It took him five minutes to make a left-hand turn on Almond Drive. He believed that traffic studies should also include baseball and soccer season (at Salas Park) and when vehicles have been diverted to these streets due to an accident on Highway 99. Mr. Weisz noted that he has been driving in and out of the intersection since 1979 and has noticed that traffic has dramatically increased since the new homes and school have been built. He recommended that the speed limit be posted at 35 mph. In addition, he encouraged Council to acquire the property on the north side of Maxwell Street and believed that it should have been a condition of the abandonment being accepted in the first place.

Mr. Prima stated that an updated speed survey would be done on Stockton Street once the improvements are complete. He noted that the improvements as recommended on Exhibit B can be done without further Council action. Staff may return to Council for discussion and possible approval of a crosswalk.

Mayor Hansen stated that radar enforcement would be done in an attempt to impact and slow down traffic.

- Phil Pennino asked whether it would be considered jaywalking to park on the east side of Stockton Street and walk directly across the street, rather than using the proposed crosswalk. Mayor Hansen replied that it would not be considered jaywalking.

C-1 "Traffic improvements at Elm Street and Mills Avenue"

Paul Fernandez, Traffic Engineer, reported that the City has an opportunity to accept a Federal Safe Route to School grant for safety improvements at the Elm Street and Mills Avenue intersection. The grant is in the amount of \$128,700 for intersection bow-outs or curb extensions with a local match of approximately \$14,300, for a total of \$143,000. Staff is concerned about traffic impacts from Millswood Middle School once it opens in July.

Ms. Fernandez stated that the advantages of the bow-outs are: 1) they provide a shorter distance for pedestrians to cross the street, 2) they reduce the speed of turning cars, and 3) they can reduce the number of approaching cars. Ms. Fernandez noted that right-turn vehicles can be eliminated by constructing a larger bow-out. Disadvantages include: 1) it is difficult for trucks to turn right, 2) traffic can be delayed if the bow-outs are extended, which eliminates right-turn movements, and 3) pedestrians tend to be closer to turning vehicles. Ms. Fernandez noted that mitigation to this would be to install bollards at the corners. Advantages to a signal include: 1) improving traffic flow, 2) pedestrians are provided a designated time to cross, and 3) air quality improvement. Disadvantages to a signal are: 1) they can cause an increase in rear-end collisions, 2) the severity of collisions are higher because speeds are higher, and 3) increase in maintenance costs.

Ms. Fernandez reported that staff met with principals and the resource officer for the schools affected. Reese School wants bow-outs and a traffic signal. Millswood Middle School prefers the bow-outs only, as they are concerned that parents would not be able to exit onto Mills Avenue if a signal is installed at the intersection.

Staff performed afternoon and evening peak counts and calculated the level of service using the projections. Existing conditions at the intersection are at a level of service C. With a two-face signal the level of service would be improved to B. If arrows were added to the signal, the level of service would decrease because the delay would be higher. There will be heavy southbound left-turn movement at Mills Avenue and Elm Street, which will likely

require a left-turn lane on Mills Avenue. Staff is concerned that if the bow-outs are implemented and they are too large, it will limit options later if they need to be removed for a left-turn lane. Ms. Fernandez suggested that a request for an extension on the grant be made to allow time to obtain accurate counts after Millswood Middle School opens. In addition, a request could be made to change the scope to either a traffic signal, or a traffic signal with bow-outs.

Council Member Howard voiced a preference for a signal without bow-outs, because it would allow for making a right turn independently from the signal.

Mr. Prima replied that given the number of school children in the area, staff would seriously consider prohibiting right turns on a red light.

Council Member Land and Mayor Hansen favored Option B as indicated in the staff report, i.e. traffic signal and bow-outs.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- Steve Herzfeldt stated that he has children that will be going to both schools. He expressed concern that if improvements are not made at the intersection, traffic will back up and impatient parents will let their children out of their cars creating a safety issue. He recommended that an extension request of the grant be made so that additional studies and projections can be conducted prior to deciding on a design for the intersection.
- Charlie Swimley stated that he has two children that attend Reese Elementary School. He reiterated that statistics show that traffic accidents increase when there are signalized intersections. This has been evidenced at Ham Lane and Century Boulevard where there has been an increase in accidents after the signal was installed. He noted that there is a drop off area just east of Mills Avenue and if cars were traveling 35 mph in an area where vehicles were entering back into the traffic flow, it would create a safety hazard. A signal would improve the level of service only during the peak p.m. period. At all other times during the day the level of service would remain at C. He stated that there are other options that would be less expensive and improve the traffic flow, such as adding left-turn lanes. He expressed concern that signalized intersections create a more fluid environment for young students to negotiate. In addition he indicated that he would be opposed to allowing a right turn on red at a signal. He recommended that a grant extension be requested to allow time to obtain actual data once the Millswood Middle School opens.

Mr. Prima also recommended that a grant extension be made and more analysis be conducted. He did not believe it was necessary to get Council direction to do so.

Wally Sandelin, City Engineer, recognized Paula Fernandez and Tiffani Fink for their efforts in securing grant funds.

D. COMMENTS BY THE PUBLIC ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

E. ADJOURNMENT

No action was taken by the City Council. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 a.m.

ATTEST:

Susan J. Blackston
City Clerk